

# I'LL DO IT LATER...

## OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION IN COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH ACT

**Frédéric Dionne, Ph.D.,** psychologist

Assistant professor

ACT Trainer

Email : frederickdionne.psy@gmail.com



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## DISCLOSURE

- I work for Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières
- New Harbinger

## WHAT IS PROCRASTINATION?

- The voluntary delay of important activity, despite expecting potential negative consequences that outweigh the positive consequences of the delay.



Klingsieck (2013) ; Steel (2007)

## A COMMON PROBLEM

- **80% to 95%** of university students engage in procrastinatory behaviors.
- **50%** of university students consider their tendency to postpone academic tasks to be problematic.
- For **20%** of students, this problem is chronic.

## CONSEQUENCES OF PROCRASTINATION

- Procrastination is linked to many problems:

– Lower grades (Kim & Seo, 2015)

– Anxiety (Blunt & Pychyl, 2000)

– Psychological health problems (Ferrari & Diaz-Morales, 2014)



## AVOIDING DISCOMFORT?



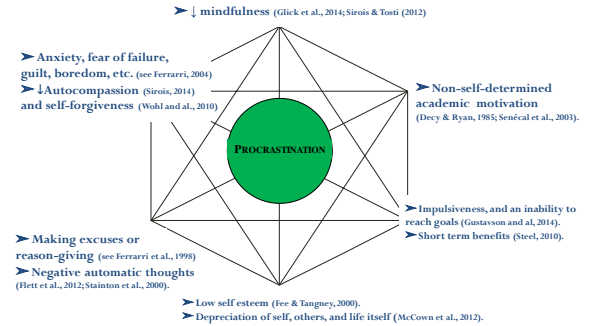
Ciarrochi & Mercer (2006)

## A TENACIOUS HABIT

- Procrastination allows:
  - Relief from unpleasant activity (e.g., stress or boredom related to a task).
  - Access a fun activity (e.g., Facebook, emails, TV).
- Short term > Long term.



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## ACT AND PROCRASTINATION

1. Tendency to avoid uncomfortable emotions or states (e.g., stress, performance anxiety, boredom) associated with a school task
2. Unclear academic values
3. Difficulty in establishing short- and long-term goals linked to values
4. Negative thoughts and excuses for not getting to work done
5. Difficulty concentrating on the present moment
6. Defining itself as procrastinator (and lazy)

## ACT AND PROCRASTINATION

- Past studies have found support for the use of ACT processes in the prediction of academic procrastination:
  - Committed action (Gagnon, Dionne, Pychyl, 2016).
  - Psychological inflexibility (Glick et al., 2014).

## ACT AND PROCRASTINATION

- ACT-based interventions in the treatment of academic procrastination have shown promising results:
  - In reducing procrastination (Dionne et al., 2016; Scent & Boes, 2014; Wang et al., 2015).
  - In increasing mindfulness (Dionne et al., 2016).
  - In increasing psychological flexibility (Scent & Boes, 2014).

## ACT AND PROCRASTINATION

- Compared to a CBT intervention, an ACT intervention produced a greater reduction of procrastination at three months follow-up (Wang et al., 2015).
- ACT intervention was found to be as effective as a Time management program (Glick & Orsillo, 2015).

## BUILDING SKILLS TO ENGAGE FULLY IN STUDIES

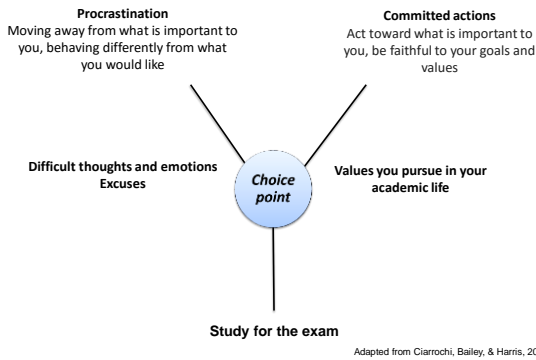


## 1. NOTICING PROCRASTINATING BEHAVIORS



Dewitte & Schouwenburg (2002)  
<http://www.bubblews.com/news/2201808-internet-distractions>

## THE CHOICE POINT



## 2. CHOOSE A DIRECTION



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## 2. CLARIFYING VALUES

- Where do you see yourself 5 years from now ?

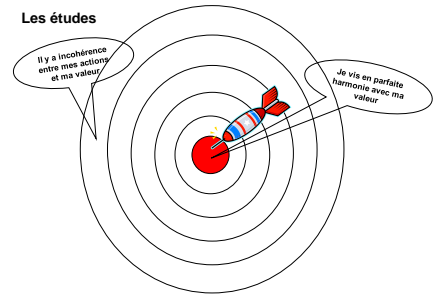
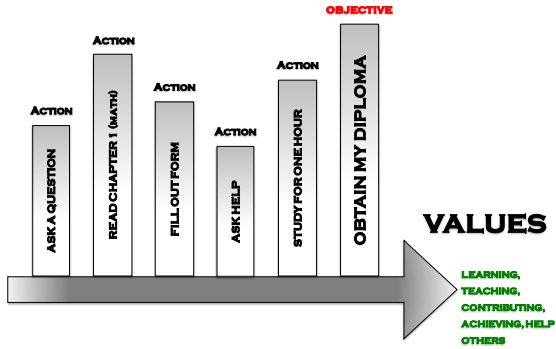


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## 2. CLARIFYING VALUES

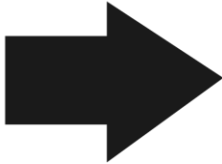
- Write about what's important for you in studies  
 – I study \_\_\_\_\_, because



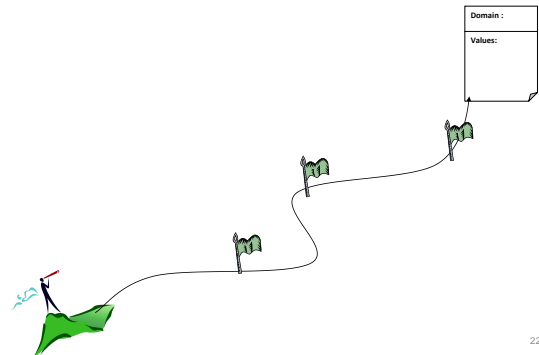


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### 3. COMMIT TO ACTION



### SET GOALS TOWARD VALUES



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### SMART METHOD

- Specific
- Mesurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

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### TIME MANAGEMENT

- List all tasks

TASK	PRIORITY (1, 2 ou 3)
<i>Prepare for oral presentation</i>	<i>P2</i>
<i>Read chapter 4 (geography)</i>	<i>P1</i>
<i>Return books to the library</i>	<i>P1</i>
<i>Write email to Emily</i>	<i>P3</i>

### PLANNING

- 1. Choose a task

— \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. When, where and with whom ?

— \_\_\_\_\_



### DIVIDE INTO SMALLER PARTS

- 3.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

- What distraction will occur

\_\_\_\_\_

- What will you do to remove distractions?

— \_\_\_\_\_

— \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. BUILDING WILLINGNESS

- What's going on in your body (sensations, emotions) just before you start a task?



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### SITTING WITH THE DISCOMFORT



### CAN WE AVOID PAINFUL EMOTIONS?

- Do not think of....



### CHINESE FINGERTRAP



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### POMODOO AS AN EXPOSURE TECHNIQUE



pomodorotechnique.com

### WILLINGNESS CONTRACT

*I am willing to feel* <sup>This week...</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_

(vos inconforts : anxiety, boredom...)

*In order to*

\_\_\_\_\_

(task planned).

*And get closer to :*

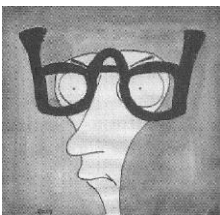
\_\_\_\_\_

(values)

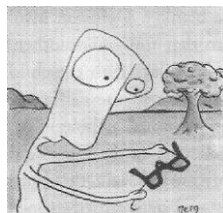
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### 5. DEFUSING FROM THOUGHTS

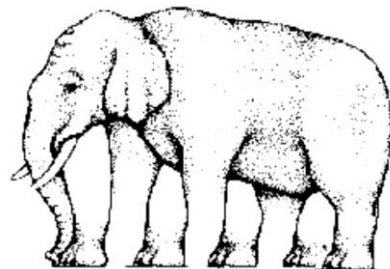
**Fusion**



**Defusion**

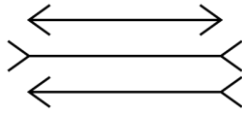


Tiré de Ciarrochi et Bailey, 2006



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## DISTORSIONS IN PROCRASTINATION



[http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illusion\\_d'optique](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illusion_d'optique) 37

Ferrari et al., (1995) 38

- 1. Overestimate time left to complete task
- 2. Underestimate time to do the task
- 3. Overestimate upcoming motivation
- 4. Believing we need to be « in the mood »
- 5. Believing that if we are not « in the mood », it won't be productive

## MAKING EXCUSES

- Reason-giving
  - « I'm too tired »
  - « I don't feel like studying »
  - « I have plenty of time left »
  - « I'm too stressed »
  - « This is too difficult »

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## 5 DEFUSION TECHNIQUES

- Don't do what your mind tell you
- Kick your butts!
- I am having the thought that...
- Thank your mind for that thought
- Is this thought helpful ?

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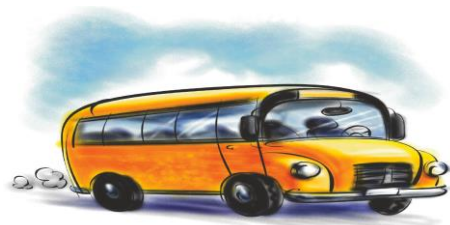
## 6. PRESENT-MOMENT AWARENESS

- Lost in studies?
- Mindfulness
  - Raisin exercise
  - Breathing exercises



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## 7. MOVING FORWARD...



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